

## **OPINION MONITORING: JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2020**

VCIOM-Sputnik daily survey results. The survey method is stratified dual-frame sample consisted of telephone interviews. The sample is based on a complete list of landline and mobile phone numbers operating in Russia and involves 1,600 persons. The data were weighted for the probability of selection and reflect social and demographic characteristics. The margin of error at a 95% confidence level does not exceed 2.5%.

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## POLITICS

2020 presidential address to the federal assembly and ratings of government institutions

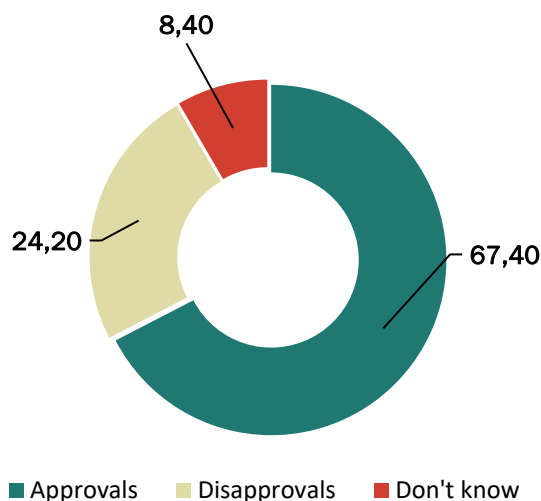
Russians assessed amendments to the constitution

### 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY AND RATINGS OF GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

January 16, 2020

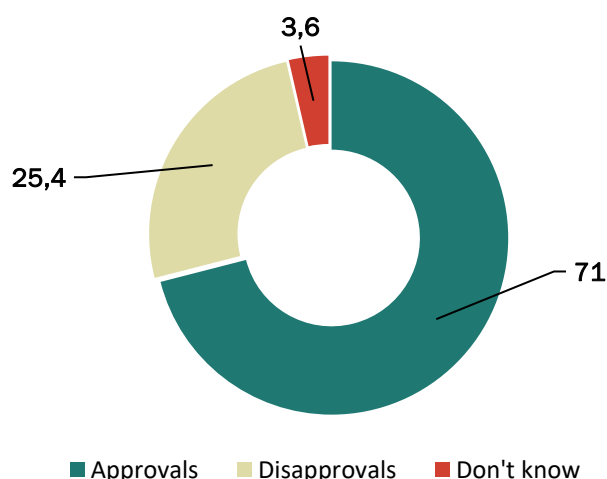
On January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Vladimir Putin delivered his annual address to the Federal Assembly for the sixteenth time. The address lasted for one hour and twelve minutes. The January 16<sup>th</sup> presidential approval rating was up, compared to the preceding week, and reached 67%. The trust level was at 71%.

During the live broadcast VCIOM was conducting several focus group discussions in different Russian cities<sup>1</sup>. Most of the topics touched upon in the presidential address drew wide response among respondents. The most resonant topics were as follows: assistance to families with children; extension of maternity capital program, proposals to develop healthcare; arranging meals for primary school students; additional payments to class teachers, measures aimed to fight poverty and to foster economic development; the priority of the Constitution over international law; banning public officials from having foreign citizenship; and Russian nationwide Affordable Internet Project.



**Fig. 1.** Do you generally approve or disapprove of the performance of the Russian president Vladimir Putin? (January 16, closed-ended question, one answer, %)

<sup>1</sup> The focus group participants were watching the live broadcast and recorded their reaction to the actions and statements made by Vladimir Putin. Multimedia equipment was used to record the reaction. After the broadcast the respondents answered the questions of the formalized questionnaire. A total of 7 focus group discussions took part in the administrative centers and medium-sized cities of the subjects in the Russian Federation. A total of 120 respondents (Russian citizens aged 18 and older) took part in the study. The results of the focus group discussions provide background information and are not representative of the Russian population.



**Fig. 2.** Do you trust or distrust Vladimir Putin? (January 16, closed-ended question, one answer, %)

**Table 1.** Approvals of government institutions (closed-ended question, one answer for each institution, %)

	28.10 03.11.19	05- 10.11.19	11- 17.11.19	18- 24.11.19	25.11 - 01.12.19	02- 08.12.19	09- 15.12.19	16- 22.12.19	23- 30.12.19	09- 12.01.20
President of Russia	65.2	64.1	63.9	62.4	63.2	63.3	62.5	62.8	63.5	62.3
Russian government prime minister	38.3	38	37.7	36.4	37.6	37.7	36.4	37.4	38.1	38.1
Russian government	43.2	41.6	40.3	39.8	40.8	41.5	40.4	41.3	41.9	41.2

**Table 2.** Disapprovals of government institutions (closed-ended question, one answer for each institution, %)

	28.10 - 03.11.19	05- 10.11.19	11- 17.11.19	18- 24.11.19	25.11 - 01.12.19	02- 08.12.19	09- 15.12.19	16- 22.12.19	23- 30.12.19	09- 12.01.20
President of Russia	26.1	27.6	27.4	28.6	28.4	28.0	28.6	27.9	27.6	28.6
Russian government prime minister	47.0	47.1	47.5	49.1	48.3	47.6	49.0	47.6	47.8	47.6
Russian government	44.3	45.9	47.2	48.2	47.4	45.5	47.2	45.9	46.0	47.0

## RUSSIANS ASSESSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

*February 20, 2020*

The public awareness of the upcoming vote on constitutional amendments keeps rising. More than half of Russians (66%) say they might participate in the vote held in spring. Those who are willing to participate are Russians aged 45-59 (70%) and 60 and older (73%). Every fourth Russian (23%) knows what was proposed to change. Most of respondents mentioned pension indexation as one of the proposals (9%).

Russians show high levels of support (more than 90%) for the proposals such as: provision of available and high quality health care services by the state (97%); social support for children provided by the state (96%); adoption of a minimum legal wage not lower than the subsistence rate (95%); yearly pension indexation (94%); Russian territorial integrity (94%); and a ban for public officials to have a residence permit in another country, foreign citizenship or foreign bank accounts (93%). The same share of Russians considers such proposals to be important (over 90%).

**Table 3.** *Do you know, have you heard, do you hear for the first time that a nationwide vote on amendments to the Russian Constitution will soon be held? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)*

	24.01.2020	30.01.2020	05.02.2020	12.02.2020	20.02.2020
I am aware; I have heard of it	72	74	76	78	79
I hear about it for the first time	28	26	24	22	21

**Table 4.** *Are you going to participate in the vote on constitutional amendments which will be held in spring this year? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)*

	Total respondents	Aged 18-24	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-59	60 and older
Undecided; I will decide right before the vote	22	38	22	25	21	16
Yes, I am	41	18	31	41	41	52
Rather yes	25	22	30	23	29	21
Rather no	5	10	9	5	2	3
No, I am not going to participate in it	6	12	8	4	6	5
Don't know	1	0	0	2	1	3



**Fig. 3.** Do you know what proposals to amend the Constitution will be put to the nationwide vote? (open-ended question, not more than 5 answers, % of respondents, shown are answers gained at least 2%; 77% are “don’t know” answers)

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Labelling of goods and food products: why and what for?

Russians are afraid of coronavirus and seek precautions against it

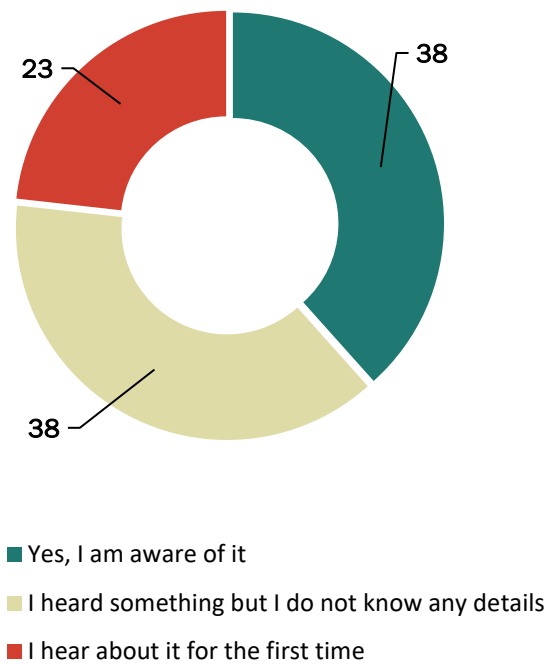
### LABELLING OF GOODS AND FOOD PRODUCTS: WHY AND WHAT FOR?

January 21, 2020

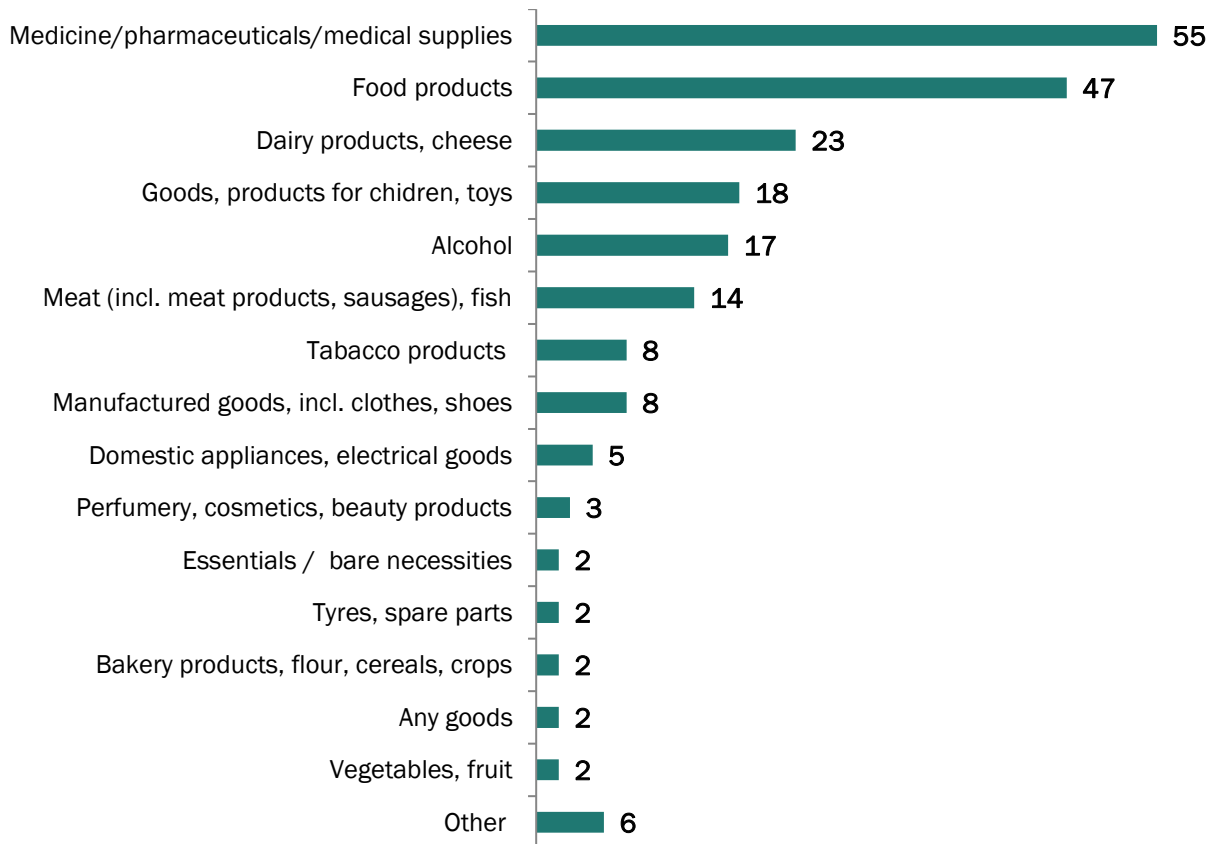
Almost every second Russian (43%) has come across illegal goods. Russia is introducing the product labeling system which enables people to track the products from manufacturer to end user and would hinder the spread of illegal goods and products. Seventy-six percent of Russians are aware or have heard of the labeling; a majority (73%) perceives positively this initiative. Russians consider that the introduction of product labeling will help reduce the amount of illegal products, enhance customer protection and increase the level of responsibility of the manufacturers and stores. Sellers and representatives of regulatory agencies must bear administrative or criminal liability for the distribution of illegal goods (92%, 83% and 94, respectively).



**Fig. 4.** Let us talk about counterfeit, i.e. faked, inauthentic goods or illegally imported into Russia goods. Have you come across counterfeit products/goods in Russia? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)



**Fig. 5.** A system of labeling for medicines, types, shoes, perfumery, dairies, cigarettes, and other goods/products is being launched in Russia. The labels on the package enable the customer to track and trace the product from manufacturer to end user (store). The labeling is supposed to help combat counterfeit goods and help any person check up the product quality and authenticity when purchasing it. Do you know anything about this labeling? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)



**Fig. 6.** In your opinion, what products should be labeled first? (closed-ended question, several answers, % of total respondents)

**Table 9.** Now I will read a list of issues related to the counterfeit products/goods. In your opinion, will the introduction of product labeling influence these issues? If yes, in what way? (closed-ended question, one answer per line, % of total respondents)

	Likely to increase	Likely to decrease	Likely to have no effects	Don't know
Amount of illegal goods/products	15	47	28	10
Customer protection against purchase of illegal goods	58	7	27	9
Responsibility of manufacturers and stores to customers	59	4	29	8

**Table 10.** Now I will read a list of subjects which one way or another influence the trafficking of counterfeit goods. In your opinion, should they bear any responsibility for selling or buying counterfeit? (closed-ended question, one answer per line, % of total respondents)

	Yes/criminal liability	Yes/administrative responsibility	Yes/moral responsibility	No/no liability	Don't know
Manufacturer of counterfeit goods	71	21	3	1	4
Seller of counterfeit goods	38	45	7	7	4
State regulatory body allowing counterfeit manufacture and sale	73	21	2	1	3
Customer consciously buying counterfeit	8	24	29	34	5

## RUSSIANS ARE AFRAID OF CORONAVIRUS AND SEEK PRECAUTIONS AGAINST IT

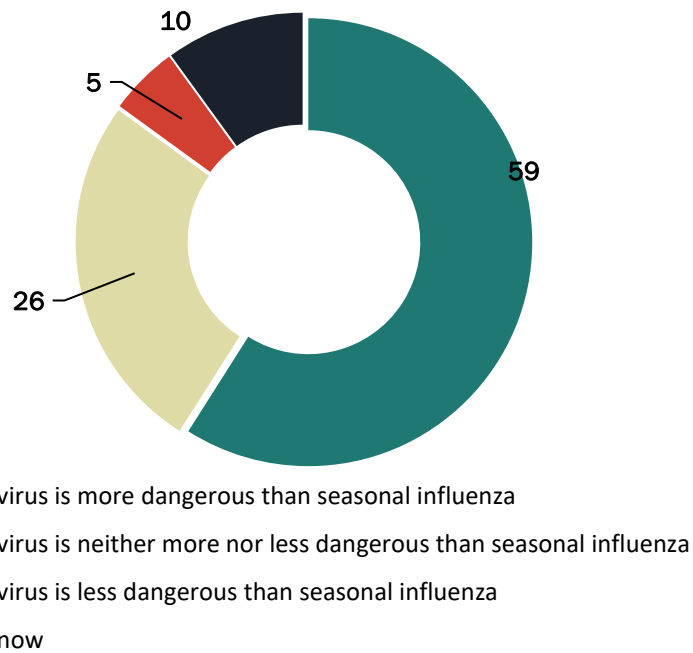
February 8, 2020

An overwhelming majority of Russians have heard of the coronavirus disease emerged in China early this year (99%). More than half of those who are aware of the coronavirus outbreak consider that this virus is more dangerous than the seasonal influenza (59%). According to 64% of Russians, it is possible to get protected against the coronavirus; they are mainly young respondents aged 18-24 (73%). According to those who heard of the outbreak, in order to prevent infection with the coronavirus it is important to wash hands and practice hygiene (37%), to avoid mass gatherings (32%), to wear a mask (23%), to avoid going to China or other countries (11%). Sixty-seven percent of respondents say that in case of threat Russian epidemiology and health services are capable of protecting the population against the spread of the coronavirus.

**Table 11.** Are you aware/do you hear for the first time that there was a coronavirus outbreak in China early this year? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)



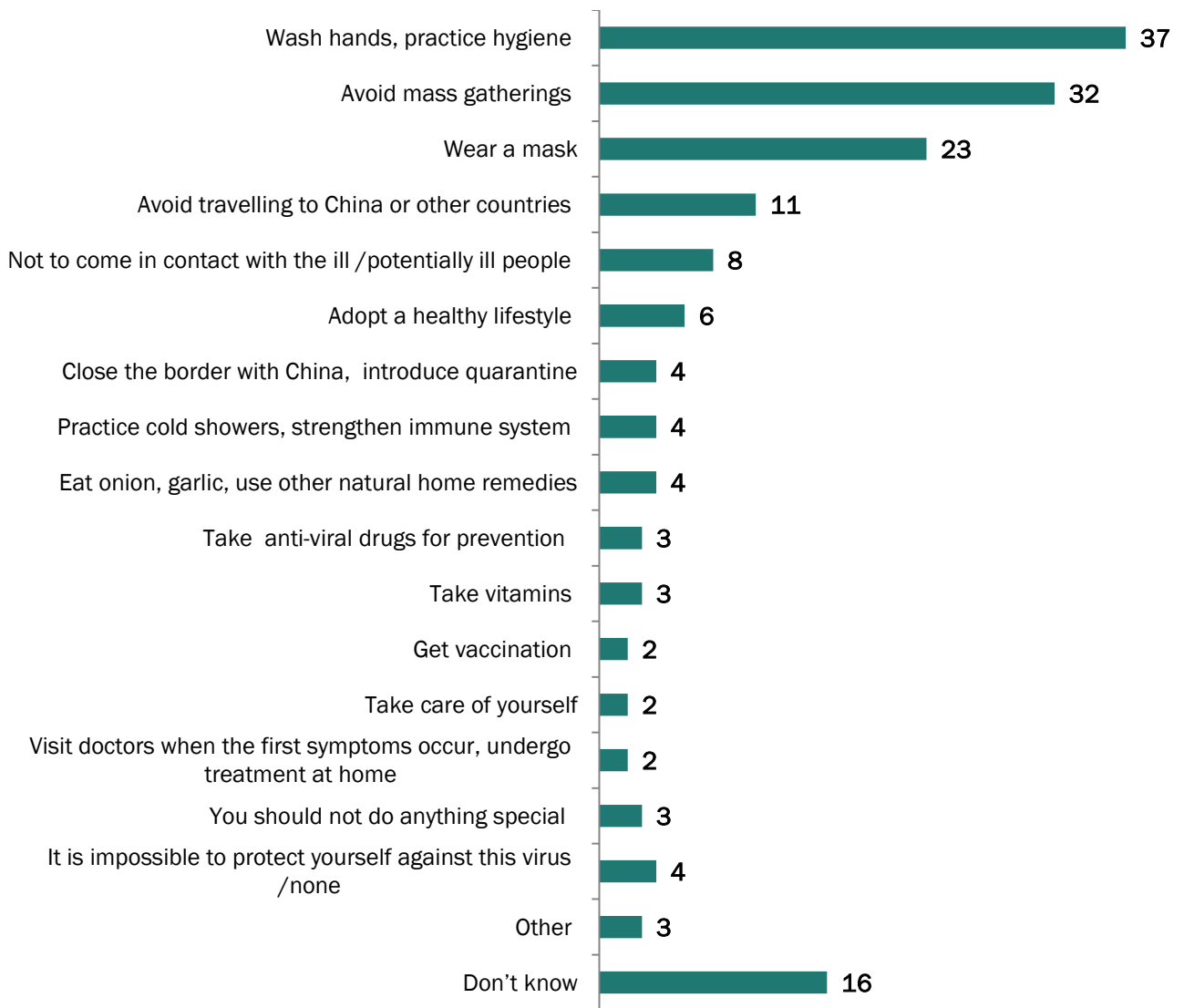
	Total respondents	Aged 18-24	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-59	Aged 60 and older
I am well aware	68	72	60	65	71	73
I heard something but I do not know any details	31	26	39	34	29	26
This is the first time I hear about that	1	2	1	1	0	1



**Fig. 7.** In your opinion, is the coronavirus more dangerous than the seasonal influenza, or not? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of those who heard of the coronavirus outbreak)

**Table 12.** Based on what you know, have heard of, do you think that it is possible to prevent infection with the coronavirus, or not? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of those who heard of the coronavirus outbreak)?

	Total respondents	Men	Women	Aged 18-24	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-44	Aged 45-59	Aged 60 and older
It is possible	64	69	59	73	62	63	65	61
It is impossible	24	19	28	18	25	27	24	23
Don't know	12	12	13	9	13	10	11	16



**Fig. 8.** In your opinion, what should be done to prevent getting infected with the coronavirus? (*open-ended question, up to 3 answers, % of those who heard of the coronavirus outbreak; answers of at least 2% of respondents*)